

EXHIBIT 23

Witnesses recount inmates' attack

DA says Irving officer was shot from close range by escapee

By HOLLY BECKA
Staff writer

Witnesses in prison escapee George Rivas' trial Tuesday shed light on the moments before 11 gunshots claimed an Irving police officer's life and on the bullets' bloody aftermath.

During the second day of prosecution testimony, Dallas County prosecutors called seven witnesses

es, including a young woman who notified police after seeing suspicious men in an Oshman's Sports USA and a crime-scene officer.

Marquis Washington is a graphic artist whose apartment, 100 yards from the sporting goods store, overlooks an empty field and the Oshman's loading docks. He testified that he saw several men

scurrying around while firing "a volley" of gunshots at a target he could not see.

"One had his hand up, and it appeared he was firing toward the building," he testified. "The others were jumping into the truck."

Prosecutors say the gunmen who killed Irving police Officer Aubrey Hawkins were Mr. Rivas and six fellow inmates who escaped from a South Texas prison Dec. 13. Authorities captured the group in Colorado after a six-week manhunt.

Officer Hawkins interrupted what witnesses said was a meticulous

lously planned robbery at the Oshman's.

Mr. Rivas, avowed leader of the escapees, is the first to stand trial in the officer's Christmas Eve slaying. Defense attorneys say Mr. Rivas never intended to harm the officer, only disarm him. He could face the death penalty if he is convicted.

A medical examiner used a life-size mannequin that wore Officer Hawkins' bloodstained uniform shirt and was punctured with large wooden rods to show the paths of the 11 bullets.

Dr. Jeffrey Barnard, Dallas County's chief medical examiner,

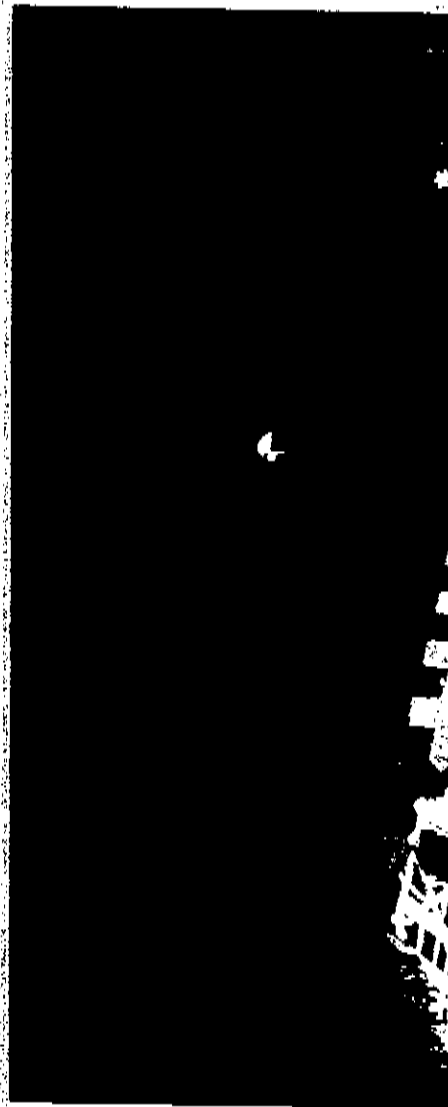
said that three of the gunshot wounds probably were rapidly fatal and that Officer Hawkins was probably near death when he was run over twice. He said Officer Hawkins also suffered a bruise to the chest, possibly from the impact of one of three shots fired into his bulletproof vest.

David Spence, trace-evidence supervisor for the Dallas County crime lab, said Officer Hawkins' hands contained gunpowder residue, which lead prosecutor Talya Shauk said was flung onto the officer.

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Are you the State Fair type?

Storm sirens may get windfall



TOP 5 REASONS FOR ATTENDING THE FAIR

1. Fair food
2. Rides and games
3. Tradition
4. Auto show

Tarrant 9th district may

Witnesses testify in Knox case

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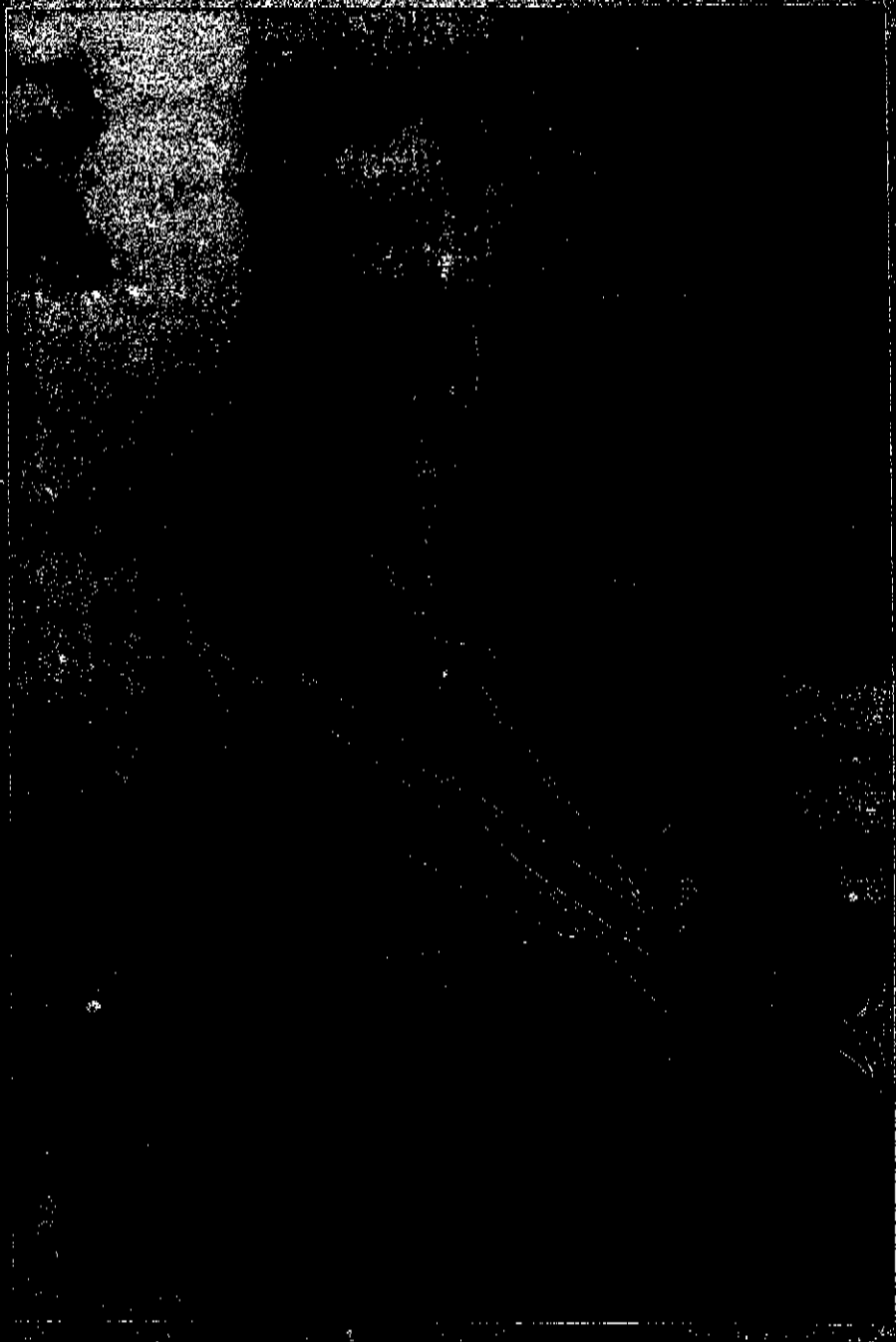
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